

Comprehensive Planning Committee
September 10, 2014
7:30 p.m.

Present: Ted Brumleve, Chairman
Paul Doyle
Ann Gallelli, Village Board
Ray Clifford (arrived at 7:50 p.m.)

Absent: Laura Fallon
Jeremy Ezra
Bettie Jackson

Also present: Frank Fish, BFJ consultant
Daniel O'Connor, Village Engineer

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brumleve opened the meeting of the Comprehensive Planning Committee at 7:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of August 10, 2014 will be approved at the next meeting since only three members are present this evening.

3. CUSTOMARY HOME OCCUPATIONS

Frank Fish distributed a summary of his discussion with the Village Engineer about the modifications of the existing zoning law for Customary Home Occupations. The committee members discussed the definition of customary home occupations and the conditions in the code for customary home occupations.

The committee's recommendations are highlighted in red in the attached draft.

4. ACCESSORY APARTMENTS

It was agreed to postpone the discussion on accessory apartments when there will be more members present.

5. Comprehensive Plan Update—village and commercial development

Joe Lippolis, a business owner and a real estate broker of Rivertowns Realty in Croton and Peekskill, and an active member in the Hudson Valley Chamber of Commerce was invited to tonight's meeting to share his thoughts on commercial and

business development in Croton. Mr. Lippolis stated that he is pleased to be part of the conversation about retail in Croton.

Mr. Lippolis noted that neighboring communities such as Peekskill, and Beacon also are vying for the same group of retailers and consumers. He pointed out that Croton's topography, unlike for example Katonah's and Briarcliff's downtowns, is disjointed—there is a physical separation of the river from the village, and therefore it becomes difficult to have a “downtown”. He discussed the possibility of creating districts (e.g. Upper Village, Lower Village, Harmon) where places like Peekskill and Ossining have looked into.

The committee asked several questions:

- ~What other communities does Croton want to emulate, and what other communities could Croton be considered similar to?
- ~What kind of retailers does Croton want to bring in?
- ~What is Croton's “brand”—is Croton a river town, a “dam” town, a railroad town?

Mr. Clifford commented that Croton needs to build an identity. Mr. Doyle noted that Croton has a rich history of the arts and at one point Croton had been thought of an “arts” community, not just another bedroom community. Ms. Gallelli noted that not only was Croton seen as a dam and river town, but a railroad town too. Mr. Fish noted that there is federal money for improvements related to railroad development. Ms. Gallelli added that there is potential for the railroad station to be a hub—there are long range plans for the Hudson line to go straight into Penn Station and to increase the trains on the Hudson line.

Mr. Lippolis agreed that the commuter rail service from a residential standpoint is an attribute; however, from a retailer's point of view, it is not helpful since in this community retailers rely on foot traffic and the ability to drive to the stores. There is an increase in the number of restaurants in Croton but does Croton have enough of a draw to pull from outside communities?

Mr. Lippolis suggested that the village might want to pursue Main Street grants that provide an opportunity to revitalize older buildings; this could give the upper village an improved and updated look and possibly bring in ancillary businesses. Ms. Gallelli also noted that in addition to the Upper Village, the Harmon Gateway area has a number of restaurants (Umami, Antons, Mexigo, Samurai, Green Growler (music), and this area could draw people from other communities.

Chairman Brumleve emphasized the importance of the process of visioning, data collection, planning and implementation—these aspects of the process can be tackled simultaneously. Mr. Fish noted that it could be very helpful to get data from a market research study.

The committee thanked Mr. Lippolis and invited him back to continue the discussion. Mr. Lippolis agreed and also suggested that it might be helpful to have the executive director of the Hudson Valley Chamber of Commerce take the lead in some of the commercial development in the village. The HVCC was familiar with some of the problems and could advise the Village on directions to take.

The next meeting will tentatively be on Wednesday, October 1st.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronnie L. Rose
Secretary to the Comprehensive Planning Committee